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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BO](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: UNSC: U.S. RAISES BELARUS POLITICAL PRISONER, SETS
OFF STRONG RUSSIAN REACTION

REF: STATE 197404

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff for reasons 1.4 b,d.

¶1. (C) Summary. As instructed, USUN raised the case of Belarus political prisoner Kozulin during Security Council consultations on the afternoon of December 12. Russian PR Churkin came to the Council chambers specifically to engage on the issue, and excoriated - in personal terms - the U.S. representative who delivered the points. He then refused to participate in previously scheduled P5 plus 1 consultations on Iran. End Summary.

¶2. (C) At the beginning of Security Council informal consultations on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 12, USUN Political Minister-Counselor Brencick noted that he wished to raise an issue under "other matters" at the conclusion of consultations. (Note: Normal Council procedure is to note all items that will be raised later under "other matters" when the agenda is adopted at the beginning of each meeting. End Note.) The Russian delegation demanded that the U.S. to specify the issue we intended to raise. In response to the Russian request, Minister Counselor Brencick delivered the points contained reftel regarding Kozulin's detention, modified to reflect that Kozulin had ceased his hunger strike, and calling for the release of all political prisoners in Belarus.

¶3. (C) The Russian delegation reacted strongly in protest, calling the U.S. comments a violation of the Council's rules of procedure and an effort to introduce extraneous topics into the Council. Chinese Minister Counselor Li Junhua agreed, noting that the subject matter seemed more appropriately suited for discussion in the General Assembly and/or the Human Rights Council. The Qatari President cut short the discussion, noting that the issue should be properly discussed after the scheduled Council business had been completed.

¶4. (C) As the Council wrapped up its consultations on Cote d'Ivoire, Russian PermRep Churkin arrived to take the Russian chair. The Qatari President opened the discussion of "other matters" by suggesting that the U.S. "withdraw" its earlier remarks given the late hour and controversial nature of the topic, to allow time for bilateral consultations before re-introducing the issue, if appropriate, at a later date. Brencick noted that he had nothing further to add on the subject, nor any reason to withdraw the informational points already made. It is important, he said, that all Council members feel free to raise in informal consultations any concerns about international events.

¶5. (C) Churkin reacted strongly and personally, accusing Minister Counselor Brencick of carrying out a "personal agenda" and attempting to be a "revolutionary" in disrupting the work of the Council. Churkin said the "arrogant" U.S.

approach would lead to members "wasting the Council's time" on "anything that came into their heads." "The next thing you know," he added, "we will be talking about the best cornflakes." Churkin continued by suggesting that the "sudden departure" of the U.S. Perm Rep had created a "lack of leadership" at the U.S. Mission and emboldened an "out of control" staff that was disrespectful of the Council as a whole. At this point, the Qatari President intervened, suggesting that the matter be deferred.

¶6. (C) Churkin left the Council chambers to join previously scheduled P5 plus 1 consultations on the Iran resolution, taking place nearby. Churkin told the assembled P5 Ambassadors that he could not agree to participate in Iran discussions at that time, given the U.S. intervention in the Council, and he would need to seek instructions from Moscow on the Belarus issue. Churkin subsequently with the press blamed the U.S. intervention on Kozulin for interrupting the Iran resolution negotiations.

WOLFF